

have been much smaller because it was a Danish explorer, Vitus Bering, who found Alaska for us, although I suppose we would have eventually stumbled on it on our own. [Laughter] Peter Larsen, a blacksmith from this city, blazed a trail from Missouri to California in 1839, leading the way for countless settlers who followed. Half a century later, Jacob Riis taught us how the other half lives, enlarging the conscience of a nation and leaving us with a responsibility we have still not entirely fulfilled. President Theodore Roosevelt called Riis the best American he ever knew.

Danish-Americans have contributed in every way to America's greatness. I'm proud that two descendants of Danish immigrants have been members of my Cabinet. Mr. Prime Minister, you'll be interested to know that our Attorney General, Janet Reno, is a Rasmussen on her father's side. [Laughter] And Lloyd Bentsen, a truly outstanding United States Senator and my first Secretary of the Treasury, one of the architects of our economic progress, was a son of a Dane who came to the United States as a teenager—as he loves to remind us—as a stow-away on a ship. His father was 16 and starving

in the hold of the ship after 3 days, and finally he concluded he had come too far to be thrown overboard, so he emerged and worked his way to our country. [Laughter]

Your Majesty, in the sons and daughters who came to our shores, Denmark has given America the most precious gifts. They came seeking new hope and new freedom. And now, through our partnership and our work together for a democratic and prosperous Europe, we can give their grandchildren in America, and all their families here in Denmark, new hope and new freedom in a new century. We are equal to that challenge together, and together, I am certain we will succeed.

So I now raise my glass and ask you to join me in a toast to Her Majesty, the Queen of Denmark, to the people of Denmark, and the extraordinary long and rich friendship between our two peoples.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. in Fredensborg Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen of Denmark.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen of Denmark in Copenhagen July 12, 1997

NATO and the Baltics

Q. Have you been—[inaudible]?

President Clinton. We've made a very clear statement that every democracy in Europe who wishes to join should be eligible to join at the appropriate time and that we will take regular reviews, the first one in 1999. And that applies to the Baltics as well as other countries. I must say that I want to thank the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister for taking the same position. We should remain open for business, if you will, for all, because we're trying to bring Europe together, including Russia and Ukraine and others, and that is our mission.

Q. Are they in a better position today than before the Madrid Summit—the Baltic countries?

President Clinton. I think they are, because it's the first time NATO has taken this public

position, with the heads of governments saying we would be open to all. They've said it before, but in a different forum. So this is the first sort of public statement about our long-term plan over the next decade or two.

Denmark-U.S. Relations

Q. Will you—[inaudible]?

President Clinton. Sorry, I'm hard of hearing. Well, let me say, we have had a wonderful partnership with Denmark. It's been an unusual one, and I think we will continue our partnership.

President's Visit

Q. How do you like your visit?

President Clinton. I love it. You know, I was last here in 1969 as a poor student, and I had a wonderful time and I have never forgotten it. I've always wanted to come back. I only wish

I could stay longer, especially because it's so warm and the jazz festival is going on.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. We wish that too, President.

Q. How do you like the Danish hospitality?

President Clinton. I love it, don't you?

Q. Is this the first time you've been here?

President Clinton. Since 1969. I was here in December of 1969. I loved it then, and I like it now, a lot.

Q. Mr. President, is this a fitting end to a busy week?

President Clinton. It's a wonderful end to a busy week because we have had no stronger ally and freedom has had no stronger friend than Denmark over the last several years. Denmark has taken a leading role in NATO and is working for expansion and working for the resolution of our agreement with Russia and Ukraine and in Bosnia. Denmark has been with us in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Denmark has been in Albania, where we have not been. It is a remarkable country, and this is a fitting end of the week because this is the week in which together, we with our NATO allies, I believe went a very long way toward creating a Europe which will be free of war, which will have more freedom, and

which will be undivided, really for the first time in its history.

Bosnia

Q. You know Congress has voted that you—we cease any operations or any participation in Bosnia after June 1998. Do you go along with that?

President Clinton. I believe the present operation will have run its course by then, and we'll have to discuss what, if any, involvement the United States should have there. I will say this. Our involvement there in the last—the SFOR operation, which is much, much reduced; we have fewer than half the troops we had there when we started. It's been much less expensive and much less hazardous to America than a resumption of full-scale war in Bosnia would be. So I think it's been a very good thing we've done, and I would hope the American people are very proud of it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:52 p.m. in the Prime Minister's Office at Christianborg Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Niels Helveg Petersen of Denmark. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to the Citizens of Copenhagen

July 12, 1997

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister and Lone and Madam Vice Prime Minister and Mr. Jørgen, Lord Mayor, Madam Chair of the Council. Ladies and gentlemen of Denmark, thank you for the wonderful welcome. I would also like to express my thanks for all of those who entertained you with music before we began. Thank you all very much.

Let me say I am delighted to be the first sitting American President ever to visit Denmark. I had planned to come earlier, as some of you know, but I injured my leg. And I thank you for allowing me to wait until my leg healed, so the first sitting American President could also be a standing American President. [Laughter] When I first visited Copenhagen in 1969, I was just one student among many who were traveling here. But in all the years since, I have

never forgotten the beauty of this city or the warmth of the Danish people. And it is very good to be back.

We gather today at the end of what will long be remembered as a week in which a new era of promise was launched for all Europe. It is the bond between our two nations and the bond of the alliance of all nations in the North Atlantic alliance that has brought us to this moment of hope and possibility at the dawn of a new century.

This week in Madrid, we adapted NATO to meet the new security challenges of the 21st century. They will face us all: ethnic hatreds, the weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, drug running, things that cross national borders. We invited three new nations from Central Europe to join NATO. We opened the door to all the